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RURAL ROUTES TO CHANGE WEBINAR DISCUSSION

Rural Challenges to Working with the Judiciary: Ask the Judge
With Rose Thelen, Praxis Technical Assistance Partner,
Judge Paul Benshoof and Deb Baer
Bemidji, MN, and Maren Woods, Praxis Rural Program

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Praxis International Rural Routes to Change Webinar

Rural Challenges to Working with the Judiciary: Ask the Judge

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

Rose Thelen, Praxis Technical Assistance Partner,
Judge Paul Benshoof and Deb Baer, Bemidji, MN, and
Maren Woods, Praxis Rural Program

INTRODUCTIONS

- Judge Paul Benshoof
- Deb Baer

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PROBLEMS WITH JUDICIAL RESPONSES:

Protection order problems:

- Won't review petitions after 4pm on weekdays or weekends.
- Doesn't speak Spanish, won't provide translator, places translation burden on victims, makes it very hard for Spanish speaking victims to obtain temporary, permanent or extensions
- Judges very concerned with protecting the abuser during extension hearings
- Won't let advocates talk in court
- Even if not requested, judge sets up a visitation schedule for the abuser
- Involves guardian ad litem to meet with parties in protection orders
- Requires couple to meet together before a hearing to "work out their differences"
- Judges who make victim blaming statements

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ADDRESSING GAPS

- Document the problem
- Identify potential solutions
- Talking to your Judge
- Have others talk to your judge
- Judicial oversight
- Accountability
- Training

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**OTHER CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM
CCR PROBLEMS**

- Strangulation often overlooked
- Deadly weapon enhancements often dropped
- Domestic violence cases dismissed, charges reduced at an alarming rate
- Charges dropped if the victim is too scared to testify
- Judge won't allow evidence-based prosecution
- Won't allow expert testimony
- Judges who refuse to meet with dv programs, attend training, ccr meetings, or get involved in interagency efforts because they are seen as special interest and they need to be "unbiased"

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**JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATION IN
YOUR CCR**

- Find out if your state prohibits involvement
- Meet with them
- Have other professionals or another judge sell the concept
- Bring forward articles, resources, models that make the case for judicial involvement
- Identify what's in it for them
- Get involved in elections, appointments, state bodies working for reform

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FINAL COMMENTS RESOURCES

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

- <https://njjdv.org/educationopportunities/ejsdv/materials.html>
- Praxis International
- Battered Women's Justice Project
- Center for Court Innovation

QUESTIONS

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